



## **Raphe Patmore, CEO of Buzka, On ANZA**

*February 19th, 2008*

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I was able to sit down with [Raphe Patmore](#), CEO [Buzka](#), recently and talk about his experience of participating in the [ANZA](#) Gateway Program. Buzka was one of about a dozen companies that were selected to enter the program in Fall '07. Raphe was also a co-winner for the Guy Manson Hottest Technology Award for innovative Australian and New Zealand companies.

Buzka is an Australian based company that offers web-based software products that allow you to share your favorite web stuff. You can save and organize all your favorite web pages by creating Spots on any interest or topic. Each Spot is a collection of pages that can be shared with family, friends, colleagues and anyone on the web. Below is the Q&A from our conversation.

### **Q: What were your three biggest concerns about entering the US market?**

1. How to ensure that we really understood the market.
2. How to understand the demand for our product.
3. How to access the US market: e.g. people and resources required.

We were also concerned about operational issues such as legal requirements and migration fees.

### **Q: What were the three biggest surprises from your visit to Silicon Valley?**

Well, this was my first time here. I suppose there were too many surprises to list. My overall perspective is that this is turning into a much more intensive operation than I anticipated. The week I spent with my mentor was enlightening and stimulating. I came away with the feeling that we had to think bigger: if we raise the capital necessary to enter this market we will have our work cut out for us.

### **Q: It sounds like the program gave you a sense of larger possibilities?**

Yes. Coming from Perth, there is a tendency for us to understate our ambitions. We did feel we were reaching our limits in that market, and we had been playing it conservatively, we certainly were not overambitious. After meeting the experts with the ANZA program, I came away thinking that we can be considerably more ambitious.

### **Q: How specifically has ANZA helped you with this transition?**

The Gateway conference the panel discussions focused on specific areas such as legal issues and venture capital. Through these panel sessions, I have made contacts with experts and very experienced people. They have helped me formulate my market entry strategy. They have helped me position the business better for investment and introduce me to prospective customers. Additionally, it's given me more confidence that what we are trying to do has some validity in this market. The interest from so many people has given our team the confidence to really push to be in this market. ANZA is currently helping us prepare for the DEMO conference. We have a full team attending; the Production Manager, the Vice President of Technology, who is the co-founder, and the Senior Programmer.

**Q: What have you liked about the ANZA program?**

I think for most entrepreneurs, the most attractive part of the program was giving VC style five minute pitches in front Silicon Valley VC's and media. Of course, there was some mentoring to help you through this process. I believe that ANZA exceeded their promises: we are very pleased with the outcomes. We didn't anticipate a term sheet from investors because we thought we were still too early stage. What we learned was that it was perfect timing because we were in the early phases of building our stage two product. We received positive feedback regarding the value and prices. This good news gave us more credibility with our shareholders. Other results included further investments from the current shareholders, a market entry plan, and a product development roadmap. The program helped us to focus on our core product benefits. Working with experienced people has helped us refine our strategy. Our team is comprised of very talented and and creative programmers. However, they are not experienced marketing people, and real issue was could we turn this technology into a viable business?

**Q: Is there anything ANZA could have done to improve your experience?**

I think they could have better prepared us for the program. From speaking with the other attendees, no one anticipated how rigorous it was going to be. I think more feedback, not just from the mentors, would have been beneficial. I was hoping for more structured feedback from the VC's regarding the presentation. I was also interested in what the mentors thought about the other companies. Some sort of debriefing later on a case by case basis in a peer group would have been interesting. There were several interesting companies in the program and I wanted to understand the differences in strategy, approaches, strengths and weaknesses for each.

**Q: Can you talk a little bit about the Fast Track Program you are in now?**

ANZA gave us a twelve page document on market entry strategy requirements. It has been both thought provoking and energizing for the team to fill out. Our temptation can be to over analyze and develop an 80 page business plan, but in the Valley, it seems you just need something that fits in your back pocket. A document like this at the outset of the Gateway program would have helped to sharpen our thinking before we came to the Valley.

Clearly, there were one or two companies who hadn't done any real deep thinking about their product's core benefits. I believe it was even more difficult for those who do not have business backgrounds. Some of the folks that came from engineering backgrounds appeared to struggle with the review material provided. They never really thought about looking at the business from other perspectives.

**Q: Any tips for other entrepreneurs who might be thinking about working with ANZA?**

If you are thinking of entering the US market, then it's well worth joining the program. Also, if you are thinking about raising capital in the States, definitely join the program. You will quickly realize that it rapidly it expands your network of useful contacts. Folks who can help you frame your strategy, sell your product, and certainly improve your business. In terms of preparation, first decide if you want to enter the US market, because it will probably mean a lot of people moving to the US. Some people from Australia may think they are working hard now, but they will be surprised by the work culture once they get here. A big difference between here and Australia is the amount of networking.

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